DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 094 799 IR 001 054

AUTHOR	Barrette, Pierre P.
TITLE	An Exploratory Study of the Contents of Non-Fiction Young Adult Book Reviews.
INSTITUTION	Madison Coll., Harrisonburg, Va.
PUB DATE	Jul 73
NOTE	50p.
EDRS PRICE	MF-$0.75 HC-$3.15 PLUS POSTAGE
DESCRIPTORS	Adolescents; *Book Reviews; Books; *Library Material Selection; Public Libraries; School Libraries; Statistical Analysis; *Teenagers; Young Adults; Youth

ABSTRACT

Some 300 reviews of non-fiction, young adult books were examined to see if they contained information needed by librarians. Six essential items were identified: authoritative treatment, comparisons with other books, a scope statement, a description of the author's background, a basis of work statement, and a purpose statement. The study was limited to the November 1971 through August 1972 issues of School Library Journal, Library Journal, and Publisher's Weekly. Frequency data tables were compiled and analyzed statistically. The average occurrence of any criteria was about 50 percent. It was concluded that the reviews are inadequate to aid a librarian in intelligent book selection. A further study using more review journals is recommended. (PF)

ED 094799

SCOPE OF INTEREST NOTICE
The ERIC Facility has assigned this document for processing to: IR CS
In our judgement, this document is also of interest to the clearinghouses noted to the right. Indexing should reflect their special points of view.

AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF THE CONTENTS OF NON-FICTION YOUNG ADULT BOOK REVIEWS

by

Pierre P. Barrette

July 1973

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

IR 001054

Dr. Pierre P. Barrette
Department of Library Science
Madison College
Harrisonburg, Virginia
22801

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
Preface	1
Introduction	2-3
Purpose of Study	4
Background	5-7
Reviewing Criteria	8-15
Experimental Design	16
Procedure	17-18
Limitations of Study	19-20
Treatment and Results	21-42
Conclusion	43-44
Recommendations	45
References	46-47

PREFACE

This paper explores an essential tool employed in book selection, the book review. The exploration is directed to the written contents of reviews of juvenile nonfiction books applicable in grades 7 - 12. The focus will be to compare the written statements included in different publishers reviews to determine if these publishers make statements which are considered to be important in analyzing the review for the purpose of selecting titles. Consideration of what are important statements will be based primarily upon recommendations and modifications proposed by Helen Haines in her book, Living With Books.

INTRODUCTION

The Public and school librarians who seek to build or to expand collections of nonfiction titles for youngsters in grades 7 - 12 have a formidable job. It is formidable since the titles selected must be appropriate for a wide range of reading abilities as well as a wide range of content areas. Each librarian must rely on whatever information sources he has in order to make decisions.

Last year alone, over 27,000 new titles were published as well as over 10,000 new editions (Tryon). Of these numbers only about 75% of them were reviewed, but in a great number of journals and periodicals. In the nonfiction area alone there is estimated to be several thousand new titles. The librarian needs to rely on the reviews of these titles in order to determine the suitability of them for inclusion in his collection. Absent the actual book itself or absent the content credentials or experience necessary to make a sound evaluation in the nonfiction area, the decision making process he employs in selecting titles must necessarily remain arbitrary.

The librarian must not only concern himself with how appropriate the nonfiction titles are for his young patrons but he must also consider the potential effect of controversial titles on the faculty, parents and the community as a whole. If titles treat subject areas that question established social institutions or their values then it is likely that pressures will be brought to bear against the librarian as well as his supervisors, even if a book selection policy exists that accepts controversial titles. Regardless of whether a policy exists or not, information should be made

available to assist the librarian in selection. The reviews should not only provide bibliographic information and statements of contents but should also, in the judgment of this writer, provide information sufficient to signal the librarian of possible areas of sensitivity. In no way do I imply that the review be a censorship tool but it should make statements which will assist librarians in building their collections in the face of changing community attitudes.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

This study is exploratory in nature. It attempts to examine the written contents of nonfiction book reviews to compare statements from reviews which tend to indicate the presence or absence of certain information. Statistical analyses are then conducted on the frequency of occurrence of such statements. Such analyses will indicate if there are differences in the reviewing practices employed by three publishers.

In analyzing the reviews this author does not focus upon standard bibliographic information such as author, title, date of publication, cost, pagination, etc. Such information is necessary and would normally be expected to be included in reviews. The focus is on *what* reviewers explicitly state or fails to state in the reviews.

BACKGROUND

Book reviewing is essential in order to provide substantive information about the great numbers of new titles and editions published each year. Most individual librarians rely upon reviews to assist them in selection, but there are a great number of problems associated with the practice of reviewing. Some of these problems will be mentioned here but it is not the purpose of this paper to compile a list of problems associated with reviewing. Certainly the fact that about 25% of books published in the United States do not get reviewed is a serious problem. Another problem is the fact that reviewing occurs in over 20,000 different periodicals. Reviews vary greatly in length and what may be called "quality." Short reviews are found mostly with fiction and children's books with philosophy, history and biographies having the longest reviews. (Tryon, 1972). Some studies have indicated that unfavorable reviews tend to be the longest in length, while those that are noncommittal are usually the shortest. (Tryon, 1972).

In 1929, Monroe and Hull conducted a study which set forth some criteria for judging review adequacy. They considered the frequency with which books were reviewed and also the characteristics and sources of reviews. Very little emphasis was focused on contents of reviews themselves. In 1946 Schultze studied the time interval between publication and review and observed that as many as 30% of reviews did not appear until 6 months after publication. She strongly urged a change in review editing policy. However, Peyre (1963) criticized the fact that many reviews appear at once resulting in undue attention on the title. After studying leading review periodicals for children's literature, Estes

(1964) found that although bibliographic information was adequate in reviews in that area, the description of contents were less valuable for selection purposes. Indeed, according to her scale, she found that children's reviews were about 50% effective in their description for evaluating the quality of the book.

Gardner (1964) investigated 46 reviewing journals which focused on the physical sciences. She found general bibliographic information to be complete for the most part but also found that the average time a review took ranged between 6 and 11 months. She did not report on the contents of the reviews. In another area of reviewing, Boyd (1967) examined the number of reviews published per title to determine if any areas existed which received more attention. This search for area bias resulted in the conclusion that a large percentage of juvenile nonfiction is inadequately covered by reviews and that some subject areas in the nonfiction category are covered better than others.

Alice Lohrer examined four periodicals which are used by almost all school and public libraries: Booklist, Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books, Horn Book, and School Library Journal. She compared their reviews to see if there was a difference in their quality or styles and also on their coverage. The reviews from the Bulletin for the Center of Children's Books received the highest rating quality, but this periodical also proved to be the most discriminating in the books which it chose to recommend. It reviewed slightly under half the books published and recommended only about one sixth of them. Horn Book, which covered about one third of the titles published, also received a high rating by Lohrer. Horn Book reviews only books it recommends. Booklist has the same policy.

The School Library Journal was found to review about 85% of children's titles and recommend half of them.. Lohrer found that the School Library Journal was also the least critical among the review publishers and she found the quality of reviews to be quite uneven.

There appears to be a lack of published studies which focus upon what is written in the contents of book reviews. Perhaps this is due to the difficulty in getting people to agree on what should be in a review. Perhaps it is due to the lack of interest in the area or the difficulty in treating the data. Regardless of the reasons for the current state of affairs, it would appear that an exploratory effort should be exerted to examine this area.

REVIEWING CRITERIA

Helen Haines (1935) in her noted publication, Living With Books, stated, "In the general field of book reviewing the prevailing attitude today is 'not critical,' but rather one of 'enthusiastic appreciation' or 'noncommittal acceptance'." Furthermore, "A deliberately censorious approach, a chronically caustic characterization, is found in very few reviewers." According to the comments and opinions offered by a number of people who have examined book reviews (since Haines) there appears to be little change today in 1973. Book reviewing appears to be a highly subjective activity as reflected in the use of the terms to describe reviews. The terms 'favorable', 'noncommittal' and 'enthusiastic appreciation' certainly are broad generalizations as used in 1935 or today. Is a review 'favorable' because the reviewer has a preference for the author or topic or knows someone acquainted with someone else or enjoys going to review parties? Or is a review favorable for what the title represents? Is a review 'noncommittal' since the author is not likely to make literary history with his effort, but really hasn't written something socially unacceptable? Or is a review considered 'noncommittal' since the reviewer is attempting to establish himself in the field and it would not be proper to be critical or analytical with his initial efforts. No doubt these and other factors enter into the 'quality' of a review. Reviews, however should possess certain basic information and as times change, so should the basic information. But, as Haines cautions,(p.99), "There are no rigid rules binding critical judgment to a given formula. In book reviewing, as in every human activity, there are 'many men of many minds'." And she

further suggests that the contents of reviews (p.99) "will be influenced by the standards of judgment that the individual critic accepts and applies - whether traditional or erudite . . . factual and ironic . . . or sensitive and psychoanalytical." She cautions, however, that there are limits to individual critical judgment and passed those limits, "we enter into a region of bad taste and fatuous opinon...."(p.100)

Haines clearly identifies a problem that is frequently encountered in book reviewing. It is of expressing the reviewer's 'standard of judgment.' The standards must necessarily be varied for each reviewer as a reflection of his or her background experiences and total philosophy. However, Haines suggests that there should be certain common standards and recommends a list of inclusion statements of what constitutes the "Fundamental qualities of good book reviewing..." (p. 98) These fundamental qualities include:

1. Good literary form, 2. Authoritative treatment, 3. Comprehensiveness, 4. Unbiased judgment.

Haines expands this list when considering books in the nonfiction and science area to include: 5. Form of book, 6. Author's qualifications, 7. Basis of work, 8. Purpose, as well as other bibliographical information for acquisition purposes.

This is the list of qualities that is recommended by Haines for inclusion in the review of books, and more specifically, nonfiction titles. Each of these eight qualities will now be examined to determine whether or not they should be included in a list of criterian statements which will be applied to evaluate nonfiction juvenile reviews.

For each of the eight recommended qualities, several questions will be asked after stating fully what Haines expressed in her book relative to

that quality.

1. "Good Literary Form. Expression should be easy and effective though it may vary greatly in manner, from the leisurely and graceful to the dynamic and analytical."

How does a reviewer determine 'literary form'? How does a reviewer determine if the literary form is 'good'? How does the librarian recognize a statement of literary form in a review? How does the librarian judge what is meant by 'good' and if there are no statements present, does it mean that the literary form was not good or did the reviewer simply forget to place it in the review?

Literary Form is a difficult characteristic to measure from a review and for the purpose of this study, no attempt will be made to search for statements of literary form.

2. Authoritative treatment: It should be written by someone who has read the book and knows something (the more the better) about the subject presented. This need not be profound, scholarly erudition; often there is more practical effectiveness in the broader, more flexible, mastery gained from a good background of information, wide book knowledge, and experienced critical judgment. The leading review periodicals aim at the expression of sound authority but this does not generally prevail.

A librarian can determine if the reviewer is a person who has some background in the area if there is a statement to this effect included in the review. What appears to be at issue here is the author's qualifications to be able to write a review on the contents of the book. It would appear that familiarization with the subject content would

be important to be able to write authoritatively on the title. Familiarization with subject content perhaps can be associated with his educational experience or degrees, but there need not be any correlation at all with these two variables.

Statements of authoritative treatment can be recognizable in a review. Such statements would be identified by some expression of the reviewers background, qualifications, or experience. Therefore, a review inclusion criteria will focus on the search for AUTHORITATIVE TREATMENT.

3. Judicious comparison with other books in the same field, or with work of similar character.

A librarian reading a review would benefit by the comparison of the Title being reviewed with other similar titles. It is a rather simple task to determine if the reviewer made such a comparison in reading the review itself. The term judicious, however, is value laden.

Statements of comparison with other books can be recognized in a review. Therefore, one review inclusion criterion will be to search for BOOK COMPARISON statements. No effort will be made to measure the judiciousness of such statements.

4. Comprehensiveness: It should cover most of the points that have already been noted as important in testing book values, i.e., authority, scope, form, treatment, literary quality, and physical characteristics.

Comprehensiveness is a broad term covering several 'points'.

A search for AUTHORITY will be conducted as indicated in number 2. A search for statements about the SCOPE of the book will be included also. Statements of form, treatment and literary quality will not be searched for because of the subjective and arbitrary nature of these terms. Although physical characteristics of the book are important, I would expect most reviews to have them and earlier studies have commented on their inclusion in reviews. No search will be conducted for the physical characteristics of the book in the review.

Statements of the SCOPE with which the author of the book treated the usbject can be recognized in a review. Therefore, one review inclusion criterion will be to search for statements on the SCOPE with which the author treated the subject.

5. Unbiased judgment: It should, so far as possible, be free from personal prejudice of the reviewer and uninfluenced by the editorial point of view of the publication. Many reviewers--among them some of the most brilliant and penetrating critics--are biased, either by antagonisms or sympathies.

Unbiased judgment is a broad subjective characteristic which would be difficult to determine by reading a review. Although it is not impossible to determine if a review is biased or not, recognition of what are considered to be biased statements in a review must necessarily be arbitrary and for the purpose of this study, is not considered. There will be no search for biased or unbiased statements, this would constitute a research project in itself.

6. Form (such as textbook or manual, elementary or advanced; reference work; professional monograph or treatise; presentation for the general reader).

The reviews to be analyzed will be limited to the nonfiction area for juveniles in grades 7 - 12. Reviews of reference works will not be included.

7. Author's qualifications are of prime importance, in denoting both scientific authority and degree and kind of research represented. Work of first-hand authority in science is as a rule closely specialized; a biologist does not write on geology, an astronomer does not expound eugenics. But there are many works that represent summary or synthesis or interpretation rather than original research and knowledge of the author's scientific background is a guide in appraisal of their authority.

Author's qualifications can easily be determined by some statements in the review. A search will be conducted for such statements. AUTHOR'S QUALIFICATIONS.

8. Basis of work, though often implied in an author's qualifications, should be clearly understood. As in the case of history, it may represent source material of first-hand research, exact experimentation and trained observations; or material of first-hand value drawn from untrained observation; or secondary material presented with skill and authority, or weakened by superficial or ill-balanced handling. It should be remembered that source material of science is rarely comprehensible to the nonscientific reader.

Reviews of nonfiction titles should include statements which express the basis of the work. Although opinions are often accepted, they are often based upon extrapolation of data. Therefore, one review inclusion criterion will be to search for statements on the BASIS OF WORK used by the author.

9. Purpose, if not sufficiently indicated in form, should be ascertained--whether it is to record observations and results, to disclose a special body of knowledge, to summarize and generalize in broad survey, to expound a theory, to analyze or criticize the work of others, or to express a particular point of view, appeal to a particular group of readers.

Reviews of nonfiction titles should include statements which express the PURPOSE of the work. Therefore one review inclusion criterion will be to search for statements on the PURPOSE of the work.

To summarize, the juvenile nonfiction reviews will be searched for statements of the following:

1. A statement about AUTHORITATIVE TREATMENT, focusing on the reviewer's background.
2. A statement about BOOK COMPARISON, focusing on comparison of the title with other titles.
3. A statement about SCOPE, focusing on how extensive the subject was covered.
4. A statement about AUTHOR'S QUALIFICATION, focusing on the author himself.
5. A statement about BASIS OF WORK, focusing on how the author obtained information for his work.
6. A statement about PURPOSE, focusing on the reasons for writing the work.

These inclusion criteria were derived from the list provided by Helen Haines. A librarian would necessarily need this basic list of information in order to be able to make a sound decision in selecting the title. This study examines whether these statements are included in three review journals.

EXPERIMENTAL DESIGN

The experimental design employed involves treatment of recorded nominal data. Preliminary efforts to find and use ordinal, interval, or even ratio scales for more extensive review analysis treatment of data were constrained by a lack of reports and research in this field. Furthermore, it was not the purpose of this exploratory study to develop and validate them. Consequentially, treatment involves constructing frequency data tables in 2x3 and 2x2 matrices and analyses of data contingencies in accordance with the chi-square equations suggested by Fisher. Treatment also includes a summary percentage table. Results of data treatment from contingency tables will indicate the statistical probabilities for frequencies of occurrence of recorded data.

For this study the level of probable significance is defined at or less than $P = 0.05$. A "P" value at or less than 0.05 indicates there are significant differences among or between review journals on the specific inclusion criterion statement. A "P" value greater than 0.05 indicates no significant differences exist among or between review journals on the specific inclusion criterion statement.

PROCEDURE

Three reviewing journals, School Library Journal, Library Journal, and Publishers Weekly (hereinafter designated as SLJ, L.J., and P.W.) were used. These journals review non-fiction as well as many other titles, but were selected since most school libraries and many public and higher educational libraries subscribe to and use one or more of them.

An intensive study of Reviewing Criteria was conducted as reported earlier. The focus was to determine if recommended inclusion criteria statements could in fact be utilized by the author to determine the presence or absence of suggested review criteria statements. As indicated earlier, some were not and therefore excluded. Six inclusion criteria statements were selected on the basis of their being reasonably identifiable by an observer. Photocopies of pages containing reviews fitting the criteria of non-fiction titles applicable for young adults and/or grades 7-12 were made from P.W., L.J., and S.L.J. issues published from November 1971 to August 1972. Bibliographies were excluded,

A total of 100 reviews were identified for each publisher and these were labeled (L.J., P.W., S.L.J.), numbered, and cut from the photocopies.

Ten reviews were randomly selected from each publisher by drawing from a box in which they had been shaken. A preliminary analysis of these thirty reviews, ten from each publisher, for inclusion criteria statements was made and recorded. A second observer was then asked to analyze these same thirty reviews after explaining the criteria in detail. Comparison of the total of 180 items between both observers was made and provided an inter-observer reliability of 0.97 with 11 items in disagreement.

After completing the inter-observer reliability check the remaining reviews from each publisher were analyzed for inclusion criterion statements. Unfortunately, photo copies of the 300 reviews were accidentlv destroyed and not available for the appendix.

LIMITATIONS OF STUDY

This study was planned to be exploratory. It sampled only a small population of reviews in a specific area of interest over a relatively short period of time. There was no immediate way to determine if the limitations just mentioned also reflect a larger population, broader interest areas over longer periods of time.

Threats to the internal and external validity of the design used should be considered as possible limitations and include:

1. History - There was no control over any changes in editorial policy during which reviews were published. Such changes would certainly effect the frequency of inclusion criteria statements. Also, there was no control over actual non-fiction subject areas that were reviewed.

2. Maturation - The effects of the observer becoming tired, growing hungry, growing more tired, hoping to complete the analysis and the like, are processes which could have effected accuracy of observation. Since no more than two hours at a time were spent analyzing the reviews the effect is expected to be minimal in this study, but no quantitative measure was established.

3. Biases - It is possible that the author was or became biased in his observational analyses of reviews. A direct attempt to eliminate this probable confounding effect was executed by conducting an inter-observer reliability check before starting the study. Inter-observer correlation was established at 0.97 which would tend to indicate initial unbiased observation or suggest that both observers were biased in the same direction.

4. Reactiveness - As the analyses of reviews proceeded some analyses

may have been confounded by specific event recording patterns for each of the six inclusion criterion statement areas. There was no examination of these effects except a direct effort was made toward neutrality in analyzing each review.

TREATMENT AND RESULTS

The results of treating the contingency data tables are given for each of the six inclusion statement criteria variables that were summarized on page 15. Although the results of treatment are given as well as comments, it must be reiterated that this is an exploratory research study and consideration should be given to the limitations and other threats to the internal and external validity of the design when assessing the enclosed results.

Each variable from 1 through 6 has four possible comparisons for a total of 24 variables. Only those prime variables from one through six will receive more extensive treatment if the two by three contingency table (i.e., each variable, yes or no by each of the three publishers), results in a probability level less than 0.05. Prime contingency tables (2 x 3) with P levels greater than 0.05 will not receive subdivisional treatment. Exception to this is variable 1.

For each variable, either prime or subdivision that is enclosed, three data tables are included. The first data table indicates the FREQUENCY of reviews either yes or no. This is the raw count of the number of reviews that were actually recorded from the publishers which did or did not have the inclusion criterion. From the FREQUENCY table, this data is then used to calculate the THEORETICAL EXPECTED VALUE table. This second data table reflects the Expected values from against the Observed values. The second data table does not serve to provide interpretive data, only relative statistical data. The third data table, PERCENTAGES, will indicate the actual percentage values from the <u>total</u> number of reviews recorded in the FREQUENCY table. The PERCENTAGE table will there-

fore provide a translation of the FREQUENCY table into percent values. In addition to compiling FREQUENCY values, calculating EXPECTED values and calculating PERCENTAGES, statistical treatments using the CHI-SQUARE will be applied to the values in the FREQUENCY table. Comparison of derived CHI-SQUARE values respecting the number of degrees of freedom for each table will be made to determine the exact mathematical probability that the values indicated in the FREQUENCY table could have occurred by chance.

As indicated earlier, the P (Probability) level of 0.05 is the maximum acceptable level for this study. Any P value less than 0.05 will be considered to be statistically significant. Values of P greater than 0.05 will not be considered statistically significant.

Variable 1, page 15, a comparison of inclusion criterion statements on "AUTHORITATIVE TREATMENT" for S.L.J., L.J., and P.W.

FREQUENCY

S.L.J.	L.J.	P.W.	TOTAL
0	44	0	44 yes reviews
100	56	100	256 no reviews

THEORETICAL EXPECTED VALUES

S.L.J.	L.J.	P.W.	TOTAL
14.67	14.67	14.67	44
85.33	85.33	85.33	256

PERCENTAGES

S.L.J.	L.J.	P.W.	TOTAL
0.0%	14.67%	0.00%	14.67% yes reviews
33.33%	18.67%	33.33%	85.33% no reviews

Chi-square equal 103.125, 2 degrees of freedom. Exact probability of occurrence 0.000.

COMMENT VARIABLE 1. Since the P is less than 0.05, it is apparent that significant differences exist among the reviews of the three publishers. Examination of the FREQUENCY table clearly shows that L.J. contains a significantly higher number of reviews indicating "AUTHORITATIVE

TREATMENT."

Because of the unique makeup of the FREQUENCY table it is not necessary to proceed with subdivisional treatments. However, it is interesting to note that only 14.67% of the 300 reviews examined in this study contain any statements on "AUTHORITATIVE TREATMENT."

Variable 2, page 15, a comparison of inclusion criterion statements on "BOOK COMPARISON." Subdivisions are as follows:

2A1 Comparison of S.L.J., L.J., and P.W.

2A2 Comparison of S.L.J. and L.J.

2A3 Comparison of S.L.J. and P.W.

2A4 Comparison of L.J. and P.W.

Variable 2A1, comparison of S.L.J., L.J., and P.W. for inclusion criterion statements on "BOOK COMPARISON."

FREQUENCY

S.L.J.	L.J.	P.W.	TOTAL
38	32	16	86 yes reviews
62	68	84	214 no reviews

THEORETICAL EXPECTED VALUES

S.L.J.	L.J.	P.W.	TOTAL
28.67	28.67	28.67	86
71.33	71.33	71.33	214

PERCENTAGES

S.L.J.	L.J.	P.W.	TOTAL
12.67%	10.67%	5.33%	28.76% yes reviews
20.67%	22.67%	28.00%	71.24% no reviews

Chi-square equals 12.6494, 2 degrees of freedom. Exact probability of occurrence 0.00228.

COMMENT VARIABLE 2A1: Since P is less than 0.05 it is apparent that significant differences exist among the reviews of the three publishers. Examination of the FREQUENCY table clearly shows that a tendency not to include statements in reviews which make book comparisons exists and that P.W. has the lowest frequency of such statements. It is interesting to observe that over 71% of the 300 reviews examined did not contain statements on "BOOK COMPARISON."

Variable 2A2, comparison of S.L.J. and L.J. for inclusion criterion statements on "BOOK COMPARISON."

FREQUENCY

S.L.J.	L.J.	TOTAL
38	32	70 yes reviews
62	68	130 no reviews

THEORETICAL EXPECTED VALUES

S.L.J.	L.J.	TOTAL
35.00	35.00	70
65.00	65.00	130

PERCENTAGES

S.L.J.	L.J.	TOTAL
19.00%	16.00%	35.00% yes reviews
31.00%	34.00%	65.00% no reviews

Chi-square equals 0.7912, 1 degree of freedom. Exact probability of occurrence 0.6224.

COMMENT VARIABLE 2A2: Since P is greater than 0.05 it is apparent that no significant differences exist between S.L.J. and L.J. on this comparison. However, it is important to note that 65% of the 200 reviews examined did not contain statements on "BOOK COMPARISON."

Variable 2A3, comparison of S.L.J. and P.W. for inclusion criterion statements on "BOOK COMPARISON."

FREQUENCY

S.L.J.	P.W.	TOTAL
38	16	54 yes reviews
62	84	146 no reviews

THEORETICAL EXPECTED VALUES

S.L.J.	P.W.	TOTAL
27.00	27.00	54
73.00	73.00	146

PERCENTAGES

S.L.J.	P.W.	TOTAL
19.00%	8.00%	27.00% yes reviews
31.00%	42.00%	73.00% no reviews

Chi-square equals 12.2780, 1 degree of freedom. Exact probability is 0.0008.

COMMENTS VARIABLE 2A3: Since P is less than 0.05 it is apparent that a significant difference exists between S.L.J. and P.W. on this comparison. Examination of the FREQUENCY table shows that P.W. has significantly fewer reviews which contain "BOOK COMPARISON" statements. However, it is important to note that 73% of the 200 reviews examined did not contain statements on "BOOK COMPARISON."

Variable 2A4, comparison of L.J. and P.W. for inclusion criterion statements on "BOOK COMPARISON."

FREQUENCY

L.J.	P.W.	TOTAL
32	16	48 yes reviews
68	84	152 no reviews

THEORETICAL EXPECTED VALUES

L.J.	P.W.	TOTAL
24.00	24.00	48.00
76.00	76.00	152.00

PERCENTAGES

L.J.	P.W.	TOTAL
16.00%	8.00%	24.00% yes reviews
34.00%	42.00%	76.00% no reviews

Chi-square equals 7.0175, 1 degree of freedom. Exact probability is 0.000814.

COMMENTS VARIABLE 2A4: Since P is less than 0.05 it is apparent that a significant difference exists between L.J. and P.W. on this comparison. Examination of the FREQUENCY table shows that P.W. has significantly fewer reviews which contain "BOOK COMPARISON" statements. However, it is important to note that 76% of the 200 reviews examine did not contain statements on "BOOK COMPARISON."

Variable 3, page 15, a comparison of inclusion criterion statements on "SCOPE." This is measure of statements which indicate how extensive the subject was covered. "SCOPE" comparisons are for S.L.J., L.J. and P.W.

FREQUENCY

S.L.J.	L.J.	P.W.	TOTAL
74	66	68	208 yes reviews
26	34	32	92 no reviews

THEORETICAL EXPECTED VALUES

S.L.J.	L.J.	P.W.	TOTAL
69.33	69.33	69.33	208
20.67	20.67	20.67	92

PERCENTAGES

S.L.J.	L.J.	P.W.	TOTAL
24.67%	22.00%	22.67%	69.33% yes reviews
8.67%	11.33%	10.67%	30.67% no reviews

Chi-square value equals 1.6304, 2 degrees of freedom. Exact probability of occurrence is 0.553.

COMMENTS VARIABLE 3: Since P is greater than 0.05 it is apparent that there exists no significant differences among the three publishers with respect to review statements on "SCOPE." No further sub-divisional analysis were conducted. However, it is important to note that 69.33% of the 300 reviews examined did contain some form of statement on "SCOPE."

Variable 4, page 15, a comparison of inclusion criterion statements on "AUTHOR'S QUALIFICATION." Subdivisions for this variable are as follows:

4A1 Comparison of S.L.J., L.J., and P.W.

4A2 Comparison of S.L.J. and L.J.

4A3 Comparison of S.L.J. and P.W.

4A4 Comparison of L.J. and P.W.

Variable 4A1, comparison among S.L.J., L.J. and P.W. for inclusion criterion statements on "AUTHOR'S QUALIFICATION."

FREQUENCY

S.L.J.	L.J.	P.W.	TOTAL
38	32	52	122 yes reviews
62	68	48	178 no reviews

THEORETICAL EXPECTED VALUES

S.L.J.	L.J.	P.W.	TOTAL
40.67	40.67	40.67	122
59.33	59.33	59.33	178

PERCENTAGES

S.L.J.	L.J.	P.W.	TOTAL
12.67%	10.67%	17.33%	40.67% yes reviews
20.67%	22.67%	16.00%	59.33% no reviews

Chi-square equals 8.7308, 2 degrees of freedom. Exact probability of occurrence 0.0128.

COMMENTS VARIABLE 4A1: Since P is less than 0.05 it is apparent that significant differences exist among the reviews of the three publishers. Examination of the FREQUENCY table clearly shows that L.J. contains significantly fewer reviews with statements on "AUTHOR'S QUALIFICATION." L.J. is followed by S.L.J. and then a considerable drop with P.W. It is important to note however that over 59% of the 300 reviews examined did not contain statements on AUTHOR'S QUALIFICATION."

Variable 4A2, comparison between S.L.J. and L.J. for inclusion criterion statements on "AUTHOR'S QUALIFICATION."

FREQUENCY

S.L.J.	L.J.	TOTAL
38	32	70 yes reviews
62	68	130 no reviews

THEORETICAL EXPECTED VALUES

S.L.J.	L.J.	TOTAL
35.00	35.00	70
65.00	65.00	130

PERCENTAGES

S.L.J.	L.J.	TOTAL
19.00%	16.00%	35.00% yes reviews
31.00%	34.00%	65.00% no reviews

Chi-square equals 0.7912, 1 degree of freedom. Exact probability of occurrence 0.6224.

COMMENTS VARIABLE 4A2: Since P is greater than 0.05 it is apparent that no significant differences exist between the comparison of S.L.J. and L.J. reviews for statements on "AUTHOR'S QUALIFICATION." It is important to note, however, that from the 200 reviews examined, 65% of them did not contain statements on "AUTHOR'S QUALIFICATION."

Variable 4A3, comparison between S.L.J. and P.W. for inclusion criterion statements on "AUTHOR'S QUALIFICIATION."

FREQUENCY

S.L.J.	P.W.	TOTAL
38	52	90 yes reviews
62	48	110 no reviews

THEORETICAL EXPECTED VALUES

S.L.J.	P.W.	TOTAL
45.00	45.00	90
55.00	55.00	110

PERCENTAGES

S.L.J.	P.W.	TOTAL
19.00%	26.00%	45.00% yes reviews
31.00%	24.00%	55.00% no reviews

Chi-square equals 3.9595 on 1 degree of freedom. Exact probability of occurrence 0.0404.

COMMENTS VARIABLE 4A3: Since P is less than 0.05 it is apparent that a significant difference exists between the comparison of S.L.J. and P.W. on "AUTHOR'S QUALIFICATION." Examination of the FREQUENCY table indicates that S.L.J. had significantly fewer reviews containing statements on "AUTHOR'S QUALIFICATION," than P.W. However, it is important to note that 55% of the 200 reviews examined did not contain any statements on "AUTHOR'S QUALIFICATION."

Variable 4A4, comparison between L.J. and P.W. for inclusion criterion statements on "AUTHOR'S QUALIFICATION."

FREQUENCY

L.J.	P.W.	TOTAL
32	52	84 yes reviews
68	48	116 no reviews

THEORETICAL EXPECTED VALUES

L.J.	P.W.	TOTAL
42.00	42.00	84
58.00	58.00	116

PERCENTAGES

L.J.	P.W.	TOTAL
16.00%	26.00%	42.00% yes reviews
34.00%	24.00%	58.00% no reviews

Chi-square equals 8.2101 on 1 degree of freedom. Exact probability of occurrence 0.00454.

COMMENTS VARIABLE 4A4: Since P is less than 0.05 it is apparent that a significant difference exists between the comparison of L.J. and P.W. on "AUTHOR'S QUALIFICATION." Examination of the FREQUENCY table indicates that L.J. had significantly more reviews that had no statements on "AUTHOR'S QUALIFICATION" compared with P.W. However, it is important to note that 58% of the 200 reviews examined did not contain any statements on "AUTHOR'S QUALIFICATION."

Variable 5, page 15, a comparison of inclusion criterion statements on "BASIS OF WORK." Subdivisions examined for this variable include:

5A1 Comparison among S.L.J., L.J. and P.W.

5A2 Comparison between S.L.J. and L.J.

5A3 Comparison between S.L.J. and P.W.

5A4 Comparison between L.J. and P.W.

Variable 5A1, comparison among S.L.J., L.J. and P.W. for inclusion criterion statements on "BASIS OF WORK."

FREQUENCY

S.L.J.	L.J.	P.W.	TOTAL
52	70	66	188 yes reviews
48	30	34	112 no reviews

THEORETICAL EXPECTED VALUES

S.L.J.	L.J.	P.W.	TOTAL
62.67	62.67	62.67	188
37.33	37.33	37.33	112

PERCENTAGES

S.L.J.	L.J.	P.W.	TOTAL
17.33%	23.33%	22.00%	62.67% yes reviews
26.00%	20.00%	11.33%	37.33% no reviews

Chi-square equals 7.6367 on 2 degrees of freedom. Exact probability of occurrence is 0.0210.

COMMENTS ON VARIABLE 5A1: Since P is less than 0.05 it is apparent that significant differences exist among the three publishers on "BASIS OF WORK." Examination of the FREQUENCY table indicates that L.J. had the highest number of reviews with inclusion statements followed by P.W. School Library Journal had the least number of reviews with inclusion statements. It is important to note that over 62% of the 300 reviews examined did contain statements on "BASIS OF WORK."

Variable 5A2, comparison between S.L.J. and L.J. for inclusion criterion statements on "BASIS OF WORK."

FREQUENCY

S.L.J.	L.J.	TOTAL
52	70	122 yes reviews
48	30	78 no reviews

THEORETICAL EXPECTED VALUES

S.L.J.	L.J.	TOTAL
61.00	61.00	122
39.00	39.00	78

PERCENTAGES

S.L.J.	L.J.	TOTAL
26.00%	35.00%	61.00% yes reviews
24.00%	15.00%	39.00% no reviews

Chi-square equals 6.8095 on 1 degree of freedom. Exact probability of occurrence is 0.00905.

COMMENTS ON VARIABLE 5A2: Since P is less than 0.05, it is apparent that a significant difference exists between the comparison of S.L.J. and L.J. Examination of the FREQUENCY table indicates that L.J. has significantly more reviews with inclusion criterion statements. It is important to note that only 61% of the 200 reviews examined included statements on "BASIS OF WORK."

Variable 5A3, comparison between S.L.J. and P.W. for inclusion criterion statements on "BASIS OF WORK."

FREQUENCY

S.L.J.	P.W.	TOTAL
52	66	118 yes reviews
48	34	82 no reviews

THEORETICAL EXPECTED VALUES

S.L.J.	P.W.	TOTAL
59.00	59.00	118
41.00	41.00	82

PERCENTAGES

S.L.J.	P.W.	TOTAL
26.00%	33.00%	59.00% yes reviews
24.00%	17.00%	41.00% no reviews

Chi-square equals 4.0512 on 1 degree of freedom. Exact probability of occurrence is 0.0410.

COMMENTS ON VARIABLE 5A3: Since P is less than 0.05 it is apparent that a significant difference exists between the comparison of S.L.J. and P.W. Examination of the FREQUENCY table indicates that P.W. has significantly more reviews with inclusion criterion statements than S.L.J. It is important to note that 41% of the 200 reviews examined contained no statements on "BASIS OF WORK."

Variable 5A4, comparison between L.J. and P.W. for inclusion criterion statements on "BASIS OF WORK."

FREQUENCY

L.J.	P.W.	TOTAL
70	66	136 yes reviews
30	34	64 no reviews

THEORETICAL EXPECTED VALUES

L.J.	P.W.	TOTAL
68.00	68.00	136
32.00	32.00	64

PERCENTAGES

L.J.	P.W.	TOTAL
35.00%	33.00%	68.00% yes reviews
15.00%	17.00%	32.00% no reviews

Chi-square equals 0.13676 on 1 degree of freedom. Exact probability of occurrence is 0.5517.

COMMENTS ON VARIABLE 5A4: Since P is greater than 0.05 it is apparent that there is no significant difference in comparing L.J. and P.W. on "BASIS OF WORK." It is important to note that 32% of the 200 reviews examined did not contain statements on the "BASIS OF WORK."

Variable 6, page 15, a comparison of inclusion criterion statements on "PURPOSE" among S.L.J., L.J., and P.W.

FREQUENCY

S.L.J.	L.J.	P.W.	TOTAL
72	76	66	214 yes reviews
28	24	34	86 no reviews

THEORETICAL EXPECTED VALUES

S.L.J.	L.J.	P.W.	TOTAL
71.33	71.33	71.33	214
28.67	28.67	28.67	86

PERCENTAGES

S.L.J.	L.J.	P.W.	TOTAL
24.00%	25.33%	22.00%	71.33% yes reviews
9.33%	8.00%	11.33%	28.67% no reviews

Chi-square equals 2.4777 on 2 degrees of freedom. Exact probability of occurrence is 0.28957.

COMMENTS ON VARIABLE 6: Since P is greater than 0.05 it is apparent that there are no significant differences among A.L.J., L.J. and P.W. on the "PURPOSE." It is important to note, however, that over 28% of the 300 reviews examined did not contain statements on "PURPOSE."

SUMMARY TABLE OF PERCENTAGES YES--NO FOR S.L.J., L.J., AND P.W.

	STATEMENTS-NO			STATEMENTS-YES		
	S.L.J.	L.J.	P.W.	S.L.J.	L.J.	P.W.
1. AUTHORITATIVE TREATMENT	100%	56%	100%	0%	44%	0%
2. BOOK COMPARISON	62%	68%	84%	38%	32%	16%
3. SCOPE	26%	34%	32%	74%	66%	68%
4. AUTHOR'S QUALIFICATIONS	62%	68%	48%	38%	32%	52%
5. BASIS OF WORK	48%	30%	34%	52%	70%	66%
6. PURPOSE	28%	24%	34%	72%	76%	66%
AVERAGES FOR 1-6 COMBINED	54%	47%	55%	46%	53%	45%
AVERAGE FOR 2-6 COMBINED	44%	45%	46%	56%	55%	54%

CONCLUSION

On the basis of this data analyzed and limitations of the study it appears clear that significant differences do exist among publishers on the frequency of inclusion criterion statements in their reviews of non-fiction titles applicable to grades 7-12 and/or young adults.

Inclusion statements on "AUTHORITATIVE TREATMENT" require further examination. Two publishers, S.L.J. and P.W. did not have any. Less than half of L.J. reviews included them. Is this sufficient information needed by librarians? The author would disagree but perhaps editorial policy and the economics of publishing mitigate against its inclusion.

Inclusion statements about "BOOK COMPARISON" need close examination. There were significant differences between S.L.J. and P.W., also L.J. and P.W. P.W. had the fewest reviews with "BOOK COMPARISON" statements. However, over 70% of the 300 reviews examined had no statements which compared the book being reviewed with others in its field. The question of the need to have book comparisons can perhaps be challenged but in the author's judgment would be specious in view of the need to make selection decisions in other than blanket order format.

Inclusion statements about "SCOPE" of work resulted in no significant differences among the three publishers. Sixty-nine percent (69%) of 300 reviews contained some form of statement on "SCOPE." Should not a librarian expect 100% of reviews to state the scope of non-fiction work in the title reviewed?

Inclusion statements on "AUTHOR'S QUALIFICATION" were found to be significantly higher in P.W. than L.J. or S.L.J. However, only 52% of Publisher's Weekly's reviews had these statements. This author believes

it is important to have more than a 41% average of all reviews contain statements on the qualifications of the Title's author.

Inclusion statements on the "BASIS OF WORK" were found to differ significantly among P.W., L.J., and S.L.J. School Library Journal had the fewest (52%) with P.W. (66%) and L.J. (70%). An average of 63% for all reviews does not seem to be a desirable mean for these three journals.

Inclusion statements on the "PURPOSE" of a work were examined and no significant differences were found among the publishers. Slightly over 71% of all reviews did contain statements of purpose. This figure would seem to be too low.

Although it is important to statistically massage data and obtain differences among publishers reviews and also between the presence or absence of recommended inclusion criteria statements, it is, however, inescapably clear that even without statistical treatments, the reviews examined from each of the three publishers fail to meet even minimal standards suggested by Helen Haines. Perhaps economic realities do not permit attaining ideal reviews for all titles, but it is not unreasonable to expect the presence of basic information to assist librarians and others in the area of book selection through reviews.

If, as Jesse Shera has stated,

> There is no sbustitute for substantive scholarship. The librarian, then, must have subject competence, a sharp critical sense, and the courage to buy those books which he believes will contribute most to the intellectual resources of his clientele.....

then it would seem since librarians cannot be expected to have unusual substantive scholarship in the many existing and emerging non-fiction areas, that <u>better reviews</u> and reviewing tools should be available.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The first recommendation is to replicate this research but this time take all reviews for a full year from the three publishers.
2. After replication, further research should center on analysis of non-fiction reviews in other journals and across age levels.
3. Subject areas in reviews should be catagorized and analyzed as independent variables.
4. Extensive use of computer analysis would be effective in reducing "BIAS", "MATURATION," and "REACTIVENESS EFFECTS." This can be accomplished by entering the entire review contents for automated analysis, using agreed upon terms.
5. Editors of book review journals should be made aware of the results of this research.
6. Librarians, whose responsibilities include book selection, should be made aware of the results of this research.
7. Faculty members in library science and their students should be made aware of this research and indeed challenge students to replicate or improve the study.
8. Reviews of non-print materials should have established standards for inclusion criteria statements. This is an area of rich potential research.

REFERENCES

"Are Children's Book Reviews Effective?" Publisher's Weekly, 197:31-4, March 1970.

"Bias in Book Reviews," A.L.A. Bulletin, 60:57-62, January 1966.

"Big Four Speak," Library Journal, 88:2069-80, May 1963.

Boyd, N.T. Quantitative study by subject of the adequacy of book review coverage for juvenile non-fiction. M.S.L.S. University North Carolina, 1967.

Bradley, V.A. "Does Design Effect Reviewing? Three Reviewers Say Yes." Publisher's Weekly, April 1965.

Christon, S.J. An analysis of selected reviews of science books published in 1968 for junior high students. M.S.L.S., Western Michigan University 1968.

Dexter, L.A. "On Book Reviewing and Similar Pedestrian Activities." American Behaviorial Scientists, 9:7-9, December 1965.

Emerson, W.L. "An Approach to Book Selection in the Sciences For Public Libraries." Library Association Record, August 1961.

Fisher, R.A. Statistical Methods for Research Workers, 7th ed. Oliver and Boyd, London, 1938, pp. 81-91.

Gardner, F.M. "Book Reviewing: Notes by a Reviewer, and an Editor," Library Association Record, April 1938.

Haines, H.E. Living With Books: The Art of Book Selection, New York, Columbia Press, 1935.

Lohrer, A. "A Spotlight on Reviewing Books for Children," Illinois Libraries, December 1964.

Measel, W., and Crawford, L. "School Children on Book Selection," American Libraries, 2:955-7, October, 1971.

Merritt, L.C., Boag, M. and Tisdel, K.S. Reviews in Library Book Selection, Detroit, Wayne State University Press, 1958.

Monroe, W.S. and Hull, M.P. "Educational Research and Statistics: a Critical Review of Book Reviews," School and Society, 31 April 1929.

Peyre, H. "What is Wrong With American Book Reviewing?" Daedalus, 96: 128-44. Winter 1963.

"Review Problems Cited in Science and Medicine," Publisher's Weekly, 201: 29-30, April 1972.

"Reviewers Debate," Publisher's Weekly, 193:30-33, March 1968

Sarton, G. "Notes on the Reviewing of Learned Books," Science, April 1966.

Schultze, G. "Time Interval Between Book Publication and Review," Special Libraries, November 1947.

Shearer, K.D. Comparison of contents of book selection lists produced nationally and locally for public library use. Ph.D. Thesis, Rutgers University, New Jersey, 1969.

Shera, J. "Without Reserve," Wilson Library Bulletin, 41: 615-17, February 1967.

Simon, R.J. and Mahan, L. "A Note on the Role of Book Review Editor as a Decision Maker," Library Quality, 39: 353-6, October 1969.

Tryon, J. Selection of library materials. LSC 503. Notes from course. University of Rhode Island, Graduate School of Library Science, Summer 1972.